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SUBJECT: GERMAN MPS NOTE IRANIAN UNITY ON NUCLEAR ISSUE,  
DIVISION ON AHMADINEJAD

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Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor John Bauman for reasons 1.4  
(b)/(d)

¶1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Two delegations of German parliamentarians recently visited Iran on fact-finding missions, encountering broad-based support for the Iranian nuclear program and ignorance about the exact details of the international community's position on an Iranian civil nuclear program. One MP emphasized that Ahmadinejad's views and policies are coming under increasing criticism, including from former supporters. He advised that the international community should follow UNSCR 1737's February 21st deadline to allow for consensus-building within the Iranian decisionmaking elite to take place, while continuing to emphasize the international community's acceptance of the Iranian civil nuclear program. He also noted Iranian interest in a multilateral parliamentary dialogue on regional issues, to include members of the U.S. Congress. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) A number of German parliamentarians have visited Iran in recent months, conducting fact-finding missions on the nuclear issue and the domestic political situation, as well as interceding with the Iranian government on behalf of jailed German Donald Klein. SPD MP and German-Iranian Parliamentary Group chair Rolf Muetzenich's December 15-19 visit coincided with the Iranian municipal and Assembly of Experts elections. Opposition Green Party caucus chair Fritz Kuhn and fellow MP Volker Beck traveled to Iran January 22-26. Both delegations met with a variety of contacts, including parliamentarians, administration members, reform politicians, and civil society and labor activists. The Iranian news agencies featured both visits prominently in both their Farsi- and English-language outlets, while German media focused on the MPs' efforts for Klein.

¶3. (S) IRANIANS UNITED ON RIGHT TO CIVILIAN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY: Muetzenich told PolOff February 2 that his "sixth or seventh" visit to Iran revealed public unity on Iran's right to nuclear energy. Muetzenich, who also serves on the Bundestag's Foreign Relations Committee and Subcommittee for Nonproliferation and Disarmament, added that the Iranian public remains ignorant of the international community's reaffirmation of Iran's right to civilian nuclear technology. According to Muetzenich, the Iranian public has so closely linked its national identity to the right to nuclear technology that they have missed the international community's message. Green Party foreign policy staffer Marianne Tritz, who accompanied Kuhn and Beck to Iran, echoed Muetzenich, noting that interlocutors from an array of political allegiances repeatedly asked why the international community objected to Iran's nuclear program and repeated their insistence of the Iranian right to a civilian nuclear

energy program. Tritz added that their Iranian interlocutors had two other clear messages: their desire to be taken seriously and to stand on equal footing with the United States, as well as their wish to be a strong regional power.

14. (C) AHMADINEJAD'S DOMESTIC SUPPORT WANES: On the domestic front, Muetzenich noted a spike of uncertainty and loss of confidence within Ahmadinejad's camp following the announcement of the municipal election results, as well as disillusionment among "former" Ahmadinejad supporters. Muetzenich's interlocutors expressed frustration that Ahmadinejad paid attention only to his "clientele" in terms of both dispensing favors and on ideological issues. Another point of frustration among the Iranian political elite is Ahmadinejad's focus on creating alliances abroad while the economy and infrastructure suffers at home. While no ideological linkage exists between the political elite's variety of Ahmadinejad opponents, said Muetzenich, the "common problem" of Ahmadinejad has brought them together. Interlocutors also told Muetzenich that Ahmadinejad is not supported by the clerical establishment, and reported that the Supreme Leader desires a "check & balance system" in response to Ahmadinejad. Mindful of German sensitivities, interlocutors also made clear that Ahmadinejad's rhetoric on the Holocaust was not tolerated by everyone.

15. (C) WORDS OF ADVICE: Both Muetzenich and Tritz offered advice for the international community's next steps on Iran. First, the international community should adhere to UNSCR 1737's February 21st deadline and not move against Iran earlier. Muetzenich asserted that this period would be used by the Iranian elite to build consensus on how to react to 1737 and that they need time to solidify this consensus. Second, he also called for the use of a more differentiated language when talking about Iran and its various centers of political power (particularly in regards to Ahmadinejad), saying that such language would be well-received by the

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Iranian decisionmaking elite. He also called for more emphasis on the international community's acceptance of the Iranian civil nuclear program, noting that the message of the U.S.'s agreement to civil nuclear technology has not been absorbed by the Iranian elite or the public at large. Tritz called for increased dialogue on issues that could serve as areas of cooperation and mutual interest, particularly Afghanistan.

16. (S/NF): OFFER TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN MEMBERS OF U.S. CONGRESS, IRANIAN MAJLIS: Muetzenich added that interest exists among some Iranian Parliamentarians to meet with members of the U.S. Congress within a multilateral forum to discuss issues like regional security in the Gulf or other issues that could contribute to confidence- and trust-building. Muetzenich noted that the German side would be willing to serve in an "inviting role."

17. (S/NF) COMMENT: While the German government continues to refrain from making bilateral gestures towards Iran, efforts outside the government-to-government sphere seems to be alive and well (and looking to expand, based on Muetzenich's offer). Both delegations credited their parties' relatively high standing in Iran (the SPD as the party of FM Steinmeier and the Greens as the bearers of Joschka Fischer's legacy) as an important factor for receiving access to decisionmakers and the influential elite. Meanwhile, the visits give the Iranian government the means to counteract domestic fears of international isolation. As the UNSCR February 21 deadline nears, the Iranians are also deploying their track-two emissaries to Berlin, as highlighted by the current visit by the Adviser to the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Hossein

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Moussavian, a widely respected former ambassador to Germany (septel).

